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AIR POUCH

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SUBJECT: The Artukovic Case, As Seen by the Public Prosecutor of Zagreb.

The case of Andrija ARTUKOVIC, the Croatian whom the Yugoslavs want extradited from the United States as a war criminal, was the subject of a lengthy article by Dragutin DESPUT, Zagreb Public Prosecutor. Desput described Artukovic's crimes and the steps taken to bring him back to Yugoslavia for trial. The writer rejects the thesis that Artukovic is guilty only of political crimes and attacks "circles" in the United States who seek to prevent extradition. Although there is implied criticism of the "complicated" American judicial procedures, Desput finds it "hard to believe" that in the end murder will be proclaimed a political act. The article ends with a promise that Yugoslavia will spare no efforts to punish Artukovic. A summary translation of the Desput article, which appeared in Vjesnik u Srijedu of June 22, 1955, is submitted as enclosure No. 1 (five copies). Enclosure No. 2 is one copy of the original article, more than a page in length.

Artukovic's name keeps popping up almost whenever there is a trial or a newspaper accusation against Catholic groups or Ustashi "criminals." During the trial last May of six Rijeka seminary students, as a result of which the Catholic high school and seminary in Rijeka were closed, one of the charges was that three of the group were guilty of "glorification of the Ustashi ideals of PAVELIC, Artukovic and others." The three students were faced with the charge, among others, that they had said Artukovic is a "good Croat and Catholic, etc." A witness stated that he heard two of the students singing the Ustashi anthem, "A Rifle Is Fired," after they had read an article on the Artukovic extradition case.

In late June, four men were tried in Srbac, Bosnia and Hercegovina, for Ustashi crimes in 1941 and 1942. (Such trials will probably take place from time to time for quite awhile, for the authorities never give up trying to track down those "war criminals" who have changed their names and places of residence in endeavoring to hide out.) One of the accused, Krizan CUJAK, was said to have admitted to being in the United States and of having had the "Criminal Artukovic as his best man!"

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Page... 2 of
Desp. No. 36
From Belgrade

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Page... of
Encl. No.
Desp. No.
From

Thus, as long as Artukovic is still "at large," he will be used, along with Pavelic, as a whipping boy symbol, an evil man whose extradition is delayed and fought by unidentified (beyond the fact that they are Catholic) circles. This recurring exercise is part and parcel of the regime's anti-extreme nationalism campaign. If Artukovic were to be extradited, tried and sentenced, a number of Serbs would be gratified and the Yugoslav Government would, perhaps grudgingly, praise American justice.

For the Ambassador:

Edwin M. J. Kretzmann
Edwin M. J. Kretzmann
First Secretary of Embassy

Enclosures:

1. Summary translation of article in Vjesnik u Srijedu, June 22, 1955 (5)
2. One copy of original article.

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